

# 'E20 causes marginal drop in fuel efficiency, but loss can be reduced with modifications'

**Rishi Ranjan Kala**

New Delhi

Using 20 per cent ethanol blended petrol (E20) marginally impacts fuel efficiency of four-wheelers that are designed for E10 fuel. But these vehicles can be calibrated for E20, with minor tuning.

Minister of State for Petroleum & Natural Gas Suresh Gopi told the Rajya Sabha on Monday that the 'Roadmap for Ethanol Blending in India 2024-25', prepared by an inter-ministerial committee, said that using E20 results in "marginal reduction in fuel efficiency" for four-wheelers designed for E10.

## **NO NEGATIVE IMPACT**

"Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) had informed the committee that with modifications in engine hardware



Vehicles conforming to BS-VI emission norms, being manufactured since April 2023, are compliant with E20 fuel

and tuning, the efficiency loss due to blended fuel can be reduced. The roadmap for ethanol blending in India 2020-25 has not identified any negative impact on engine health due to blending of ethanol in petrol up to E20," he added.

An industry source said that vehicles conforming to BS-VI emission norms, being manufactured in India since April 2023, are compliant

with E20 fuel. In old two-wheelers and passenger vehicles, E20 may lead to corrosion in fuel pipes. However, some original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are working on it by retrofitting the fuel pipes and replacing the older ones.

## **SAVING FOREX**

During the last 10 years, till ethanol supply year (ESY) 2023-24 (November-October), ethanol blending in petrol by PSU oil marketing companies (OMCs) resulted in savings of more than ₹1.13 lakh crore of foreign exchange. It also led to crude oil substitution of about 1.92 lakh tonnes and CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction of around 578 lakh tonnes. Savings on account of the ethanol blended petrol (EBP) programme are in respect of foreign exchange conserved. The EBP programme has also supported expeditious payment to sugarcane farmers, the Min-

ister noted.

Last month, Gopi informed the Upper House that the 'Roadmap for Ethanol Blending in India 2020-25' projects that a successful E20 programme can save about \$4 billion per annum.

Setting up of dedicated ethanol plants in ethanol-deficit States has made ethanol available closer to the petrol consumption centre, leading to optimisation in transportation. Distilleries and PSU OMCs have been directed to create sufficient ethanol storage capacities, he added.

"Further, OMCs have signed long-term off-take agreements with 232 ethanol plants for an annual off-take of 791.6 crore litres, expanded storage capacity for higher blending percentages and started transporting ethanol-blended petrol through rail to deficit regions to ensure the smooth roll-out of the E20 programme," the Minister said.

# Cairn eyes 300 mn oil barrels via enhanced recovery tech

**SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY**  
New Delhi, 11 March

Cairn Oil & Gas is firming up plans to extract up to 300 million incremental barrels from the Mangala-Bhagyam-Aishwarya (MBA) oilfield grouping in Rajasthan's Barmer, using enhanced oil recovery (EoR) techniques, its Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Hitesh Vaid told *Business Standard*.

The country's largest oil and gas producer is investing close to \$200 million into Alkaline-Surfactant-Polymer (ASP) flooding and is already on track to extract up to 30 million incremental barrels of oil from the legacy oilfields in Mangala.

Producing since 2009, Mangala oilfield is the largest onshore oilfield discovered in India. "Our first effort is to manage the natural production decline from our existing fields. We will continue to drill infill wells. We spend \$100-200 million annually on drilling additional wells. But for the past one year, we have been discussing ASP, which is the next level of recovery," Vaid said.

The technique also works in tandem with the company's existing operating concept of having clusters of wells, or wellpads, where 5-15 wells connect to each other horizontally and laterally.

"In one of the clusters, we have started executing ASP on a larger scale. We have also awarded the tender for establishing the infrastructure needed to process the chemicals. Work is ongoing for 6-8 months now," Vaid said.

The project is halfway through, and Cairn plans to begin injecting the chemical compounds by mid-2025. A relatively new introduction to India, ASP was deployed by state-run ONGC in 2019 at the Viraj oilfield in Gujarat's Cambay Basin.

Cairn has made 38 discoveries in the massive RJ-ON-90/1 onshore block spread across 3,111 km, of which 10-12 are currently being produced from. In the block, the company has also invested in unlocking 'tight oil' formations and is working on creating a plan to extract from such formations in 3-4 months, Vaid said.

Tight oil is a geological rock layer containing oil, but with very low permeability, which means oil cannot flow freely without advanced extraction techniques like hydraulic fracturing. Cairn has hired 25 experts from Canada and the United States who have experience of working on hydraulic fracturing.

According to latest government estimates from 2018, recovery level is 60 percent for oil fields and 80 percent for gas fields in India.



**Hitesh Vaid, chief financial officer of Cairn Oil & Gas, said that the firm spends \$100-\$200 mn annually on drilling additional wells. But for last one year, they have been discussing ASP, which is the next level of recovery**

Enhanced extraction is often required for increasing oil production beyond what is achieved by naturally flowing vertical wells.

The extraction of oil and gas resources is a complicated, strenuous process and ER techniques involve changing the chemical and physical properties of the formation fluids and rocks to recover the remaining crude oil. This could involve infill drilling, hydraulic fracturing and drilling horizontal and multilateral wells.

## Link with Barmer refinery

A pipeline linking Cairn's facilities in the MBA oilfields has been established to Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd's (HPCL) upcoming 9 million metric tonnes per annum (mmtpa) capacity refinery also located in Barmer. "They (HPCL) have built one full pipeline from the shore to the terminal. But they also built connectivity which reaches up to our gate," Vaid said. With pre-commissioning of multiple units already being done, the refinery was set to begin processing crude oil in the first few months of 2025, but is now looking at a commissioning deadline of end-2025, officials told *Business Standard* last month.

Announced in 2013, India's largest greenfield integrated refinery and petrochemical complex, the Rajasthan Refinery Project (RRP), has seen the deadline being extended multiple times.

## CCI clears ONGC-NTPC Green's proposal to acquire Ayana



PRESSTRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, March 11

**THE COMPETITION COMMISSION** of India on Tuesday cleared ONGC-NTPC Green's proposal to acquire renewable energy firm Ayana for ₹19,500 crore (\$2.3 billion). ONGC-NTPC Green (ONGPL) is a 50:50 joint venture between ONGC Green (OGL) and NTPC Green Energy (NGEL).

"The proposed combination involves the acquisition of 100% equity share capital of the target (Ayana Renewable Power) by the acquirer (ONGC-NTPC Green)," the regulator said. ONGC Green and NTPC Green Energy are wholly-owned subsidiaries of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and NTPC, respectively.

"CCI approves the proposed combination involving the acquisition of Ayana Renewable Power by ONGC NTPC Green," the Competition Commission of India (CCI) said in a post on X. Last month, ONGPL said it signed a share purchase agreement to acquire a 100% equity stake in Ayana Renewable Power (Ayana).

The agreement was signed with Ayana's current shareholders National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) (51%), British International Investment (BII) and its subsidiaries (32%), and Eversource Capital (17%). The transaction is valued at \$2.3 billion, it added. This is the second biggest deal in the renewable energy space. Adani Green Energy (AGEL) in October 2021 acquired SB Energy India from SoftBank Group Corp (SBG) and Bharti Group in an all-cash deal worth \$3.5 billion.

# CPSEs catching up on corporate governance, survey reveals

**FE BUREAU**  
New Delhi, March 11

**INDIA'S TOP CENTRAL** public sector enterprises (CPSEs) with "maharatna" and "navratna" tags reported a mixed picture in their efforts to improve corporate governance, going by the fourth edition of the survey by Excellence Enablers.

The survey, which covers the four years through FY24 reveals these companies (38 at last count) witnessed an increase in audit committee meetings, and a further rise in directors' attendance at board meetings.

In FY24, for instance, no director had zero attendance at board meetings, while in FY23, 14 directors did not turn up at all. As many as 77 directors had 100% attendance in FY24, the same as in FY23, but lower than 84 in FY21. Independent directors (IDs), meanwhile, saw a slight improvement in full attendance in FY24, with 89 IDs reporting 100% attendance in FY24, up from 87 in FY23. In FY21, 95 IDs had shown full attendance.

The report stresses that independence is one of the

**Attendance of directors in board meeting**



**Attendance of IDs in board meetings**



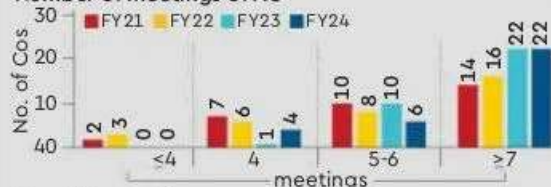
\*Attendance is based on details disclosed by cos.  
\*Annual Report of 1 co was not published as on January 19, 2025. Hence it has not been considered for FY24.

most important expectations from statutory auditors. To ensure this, there has been an increasing focus on reducing, if not eliminating, non-audit functions being performed by statutory auditors. However, in FY24, 17 companies paid

no non-audit fees, compared with 22 companies in FY21. "In all 4 FYs, 13 companies continued to not pay any non-audit fee to the auditors," the report highlighted.

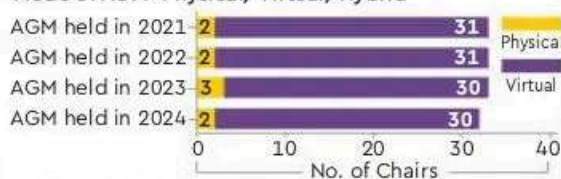
The survey further said that in FY24, 22 companies

**Number of meetings of AC**



\*Annual Report of 1 co was not published as on January 19, 2025. Hence it has not been considered for FY24.

**Mode of AGM- Physical/Virtual/Hybrid**



\*No company conducted its AGM in hybrid mode.  
\*AGM date of 1 co was not published as on January 19, 2025.

**% of non-audit to audit fee paid to statutory auditors**



\*Annual Report of 1 co was not published as on January 19, 2025. Hence it has not been considered for FY24.

held more than 7 audit meetings, compared with 14 in FY21. The highest number of meetings in any of these companies in FY21 was 13, and in FY2, FY23 and FY24 it was 14. SEBI regulations say that audit committee shall meet at least

four times in a year and not more than one hundred and twenty days shall elapse between two meetings. "The regulatory prescription that the AC shall meet at least 4 times in a year is clearly inadequate," said the report.





# Good governance, better PSUs

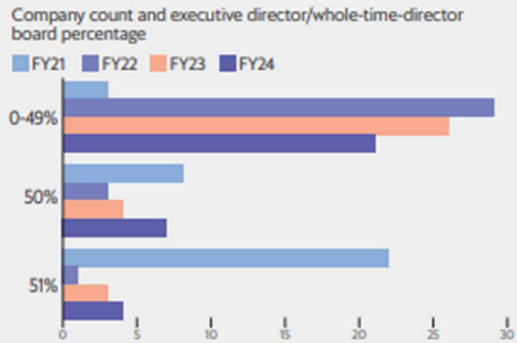
By Payal Bhattacharya  
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Corporate governance plays a vital role in the effective functioning of public sector undertakings (PSUs). To maximise the board's impact, a delicate balance must be maintained. Optimal board size and a strategic mix of executive and non-executive directors are essential for operational insight. Integrating youthful perspectives into PSUs enhances relevance. Furthermore, reasonable tenure of directors is required for effective contribution, while prolonged terms can lead to staleness. Well-structured sessions are crucial for unlocking greater value, and excessive meetings pose a risk to productivity and can lead to managerial overreach. Ultimately, a dynamic, balanced and engaged board is crucial for PSUs navigating today's complex corporate landscape and setting examples of good governance practices. The fourth edition of the Excellence Enablers' survey delves into the multifaceted landscape of corporate governance among 13 *Maharatna* and 20 *Navratna* companies. Here are some of the findings.

## PSUs board sizes held firm for three years mint



## Most PSUs maintain an optimal mix of executive and non-executive directors



As per Department of Public Enterprises Guidelines, 2010, the number of functional directors (including chairman and managing director/managing director) should not exceed 50% of the actual strength of the Board.

Source: Excellence Enablers' survey on Corporate Governance in Maharatna and Navratna companies



# With focus on education and healthcare initiatives, India Inc's CSR spending rises 13% in 2022-23

**KR Srivats**  
New Delhi

India Inc's annual corporate social responsibility (CSR) spending saw a 13 per cent rise in 2022-23, reaching ₹29,988 crore, compared to ₹26,616 crore in the previous year. More than half of this expenditure was directed towards education and healthcare, Harsh Malhotra, Minister of State for Corporate Affairs, informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply.

Education emerged as the biggest area of focus, receiving an estimated ₹10,086 crore — nearly one-third of the total CSR outlay. Meanwhile, healthcare accounted for ₹6,830 crore, reflecting a growing commitment from corporates to social welfare initiatives.

## **STEADY GROWTH**

Data shared by the Minister revealed a consistent upward trend in CSR contributions over the years. From ₹20,218 crore in 2018-19, India Inc's

CSR outlay has steadily increased, reaching ₹24,966 crore in 2019-20 and ₹26,211 crore in 2020-21. The sharp jump in 2022-23 underscores the private sector's growing role in nation-building through social investment.

The Companies (CSR Policy) Rules, 2014, empower corporate boards to undertake these initiatives independently or through registered trusts, societies or government-backed entities. A key regulatory change implemented in 2021 mandates

that all CSR implementing agencies be registered with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). As of now, 87,578 such agencies have been registered under the MCA21 system. However, the government does not maintain data on CSR expenditure at the level of individual parliamentary constituencies or implementing agencies.

Schedule VII of the Companies Act lists eligible CSR activities, including poverty alleviation, healthcare, sanit-

ation, education, rural sports, and initiatives to reduce social and economic inequalities. While companies are encouraged to prioritise local areas for their CSR efforts, they have flexibility to balance regional and national development priorities.

As regulatory frameworks evolve and CSR commitments deepen, these investments are expected to play a crucial role in addressing socio-economic challenges across the country.



## गैस रिफिलिंग करने के मामले में तीन पर केस

नोएडा। निटारी गांव में अवैध तरीके से गैस रिफिलिंग करने के मामले में सेक्टर-20 थाने में तीन लोगों के खिलाफ केस दर्ज हुआ है। केस जिला आपूर्ति निरीक्षक की ओर से दर्ज कराया गया है। जिला आपूर्ति निरीक्षक सोनू अग्रवाल ने पुलिस को दी शिकायत में बताया कि भारतीय किसान यूनियन के जिला उपाध्यक्ष ने नगर मजिस्ट्रेट को एक पत्र लिखकर दिया था, जिसमें उन्होंने आरोप लगाया था कि निटारी गांव में कुछ लोगों द्वारा गैस की अवैध तरीके से रिफिलिंग की जा रही है। थाना प्रभारी ने बताया कि पूर्ति निरीक्षक ने इस मामले में अरुण सिंह, स्वीटी तथा अर्जुन के खिलाफ मुकदमा दर्ज करवाया है।